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U. S. Department of Agriculture

19 HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Monday, October 26, 1931

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Subject: "Canning Poultry." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U.S.D.A.

Bulletins available: Mimeographed directions for canning chicken at home. Order from the Bureau of Home Economics. "Canning Fruits and Vegetables at Home." Order from the U.S.D.A.

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So many people have been asking questions about canning poultry that I'm taking this Monday morning off just to discuss it. At this time of year there are quite often surplus birds in the home poultry flock that will not be paying their room and board if they are kept over the winter. During the culling season when fresh poultry is selling at a low price, it is often economy to put these surplus birds up in cans rather than to market them fresh. Nothing makes a more convenient addition to the emergency supply shelf than cans of chicken all ready for the arrival of unexpected guests, or for a picnic or for many other last-minute occasions when there is no time to cook a chicken.

Moreover, canning chicken at home sometimes becomes a profitable business for the housewife. Several women of my acquaintance have built up a good market for their home-canned chicken and have become experts at putting out a delicious product.

Either young or old birds may be canned by home methods. Plump, well-fed hens, two years old, have as good a texture and even better flavor, when canned, than six-months-old chickens.

Specialists at the Bureau of Home Economics have been making a study of the best methods of canning chicken at home. Would you be interested in hearing their advice on the subject?

I shouldn't be surprised, Arabella, if you would want a pencil any time now. You might like to jot down a few notes here and there as we discuss the best methods of putting up chicken. I warn you ahead of time that we're going in for a lot of directions today.

The quality of canned poultry, very naturally depends on the condition of the fresh poultry and the way you can it. As soon as the animal heat has disappeared--usually six to eight hours after killing--the fowl is ready for canning. Delicious, wholesome, canned poultry can only come from wholesome fresh poultry, properly sterilized. Poultry, like all other meat, has a compact texture which makes heat penetration slow. A very high



temperature is necessary for sterilizing--a temperature of 240 to 250 degrees F, far above the boiling point of water. Of course, that means using a pressure cooker since high temperature needed for safety can not be attained in the hot water bath.

Prepare the chicken for canning, just as you would for cooking. Pick, singe and remove the pin feathers. Wash the birds. Then disjoint and cut them into the usual pieces and discard the entrails. Cut out the oil sac and the lungs and kidneys and throw them away. The giblets and eggs should also be removed, since they are not used in canning.

Be particularly careful not to break the gall bladder. If this happens by mistake, do not use that chicken for canning because it will have a very unpleasant taste. Trim off any large pieces of fat. A great deal of fat in the jar, you see, is likely to cook out on the rubber ring during the processing and may cause the ring to slip. And that may spoil the seal. Cut the white meat from the breast bone and shoulders in large pieces, but leave the meat on the bone in the other pieces.

The very bony parts like the neck, which will be cut off close to the body, and the back and perhaps the feet--these parts will not be canned but will be used for making broth to fill up the jars. Skin these bony pieces, put them in a kettle and cover them with lightly salted cold water. Bring the water to a boil and then simmer for fifteen minutes. This hot broth will be used to fill up the jars after the meat has been packed in. I might add right here that the chicken will be packed hot in clean hot jars. It may also be canned in tin cans.

Chicken is prepared for the jar or tin by preheating before it is packed in. This preheating may be done in different ways, but however you do it, remember that the object is simply to heat the meat thoroughly, not to cook it. If it is cooked until done, the canning process later will overcook it.

For containers you can use either tin cans or pint glass jars. Please notice that word "pint." Quart jars are not recommended because this larger size does not allow the heat to penetrate so readily and sterilization is not so certain unless a longer heating process is used.

Pack the chicken into clean tin cans--or hot glass jars--and use some pieces containing bone with each container. Don't cram the meat in, for that will pack it so tightly that the broth can't circulate freely in the jar. Some people use both white and dark meat in each jar. Others like to put up a few jars of all white meat for special occasions. Suit yourself about that. But work rapidly as you pack so the containers can be put in the hot cooker before the meat cools.

There are several ways to preheat this meat for canning.

Here is method number 1:

Place the pieces of chicken in a kettle with a small quantity of boiling water, lower the heat and simmer. After thoroughly heating, pack the chicken in tin cans or glass jars. Then bring the broth to boiling, and pour it over the chicken to within one-half inch of the top of the container. Now add salt--one-half to one teaspoon to each pint jar. Some





people like to add a small quantity of gelatin to the broth. You can use 1 tablespoon of gelatin to each pint of broth. Of course, the gelatin has to be softened in a little cold liquid before it is dissolved in the hot broth. Now, fully seal the tin cans, or partially seal the glass jars, and place each as soon as it is ready, in the hot cooker, so the meat will not be cooled.

That is the first method of preheating. Now here is Method 2:

Place the pieces of chicken in a baking pan, add a little water and heat in a moderate oven. If the drippings are not dark brown, dilute with boiling broth prepared from the bony pieces, and pour this over the meat after it is packed into the containers. If the drippings are too dark, use the broth alone. Add salt and gelatin if desired. Fully seal the tin cans, or partly seal the glass jars. And place each as soon as it is ready in the hot cooker, before the meat has time to cool.

That is Method 2. Now for the third and last method. This is only to be used when the canning is being done in tin cans.

Put the chicken direct into the tin cans before heating at all. Add the salt and the boiling broth made from the bony pieces. Leave at least  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch space at the top of the can, because the meat will expand when it is heated. Now preheat by placing the cans in a bath of boiling water. This comes to within 1 to one and one-half inches of the top of the can. Or the cans may be heated in a steamer. Continue heating until the meat is steaming hot. This requires about 40 to 60 minutes, depending on the size of the can.

The next step is the actual canning--or "processing", as the experts call it.

After preheating, packing and sealing the containers, the processing in the steam pressure cooker should begin immediately. A chart giving time, temperature and pressure for this process has been prepared by the canning experts.

Chicken which is steaming hot when packed or sealed will require 50 minutes at 15 pounds pressure, if packed in a No. 2 plain tin can. A No. 2 and  $\frac{1}{2}$  can will require 55 minutes and a No. 3 sixty minutes. Pint glass jars will also require 60 minutes at 15 pounds pressure.

The final step is cooling. When you are using glass jars or No. 3 tin cans, allow the pressure gauge of your cooker to reach zero before you open the petcock. Then open it gradually so there will be no sudden outrush of steam. Complete the seal on the glass jars, and place them in the open air. But be sure they are protected from drafts that might crack the glass.

However, if you are using No. 2 or No. 2 and  $\frac{1}{2}$  tin cans, open the petcock on the pressure cooker gradually at the end of the processing period and allow the steam to escape. Place the tin cans of all sizes in running water to cool.

Let's all take a long breath now. That was quite a stretch of solid and technical information for me to give all at once. I hope I told it





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clearly enough so that you could get every important point. Did I? Well, think it over. In case, you would like those directions down on paper for your files, I have some mimeographed copies here ready for you. Write me for the directions for canning chicken at home and I'll see that you get a copy.

Further directions for using the steam pressure cooker are given in the canning bulletin. I'm sorry we haven't time for a menu and recipe today. Next Monday I'll start with the menu, so you'll be sure to have one.

Tomorrow: "Odds and Ends from the Mailbag"

